

JOINT EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The construction of "world class" hospitals at both the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and Fort Belvoir is a necessity. Servicemembers and their families deserve nothing less. However, there is concern that this is not going to occur under the current approach of the Department of Defense. For example, the high degree of concurrency within the program and the total lack of adequate planning and design have resulted in an increased cost of the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center from the estimate of \$201,000,000 in May 2005 to \$940,000,000 in early calendar year 2008. Even with these increases the Department of Defense has not included funding for eight items at the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, not the least of which are the Warrior Clinic, Warrior in Transition housing, enlisted housing, and parking. Furthermore, the Department of Defense and the community have yet to solve how ingress and egress will be affected to support a facility for which the daily population of patients and staff will increase by over 4,000 individuals.

The number of patient visits per year for the three existing hospitals is currently in excess of 1,500,000. The transition to two new facilities will be a daunting challenge under the best of circumstances. The Secretary of Defense is directed to provide a thorough and detailed milestone schedule

which outlines projected construction completion, move out of the facilities, and transition of staff personnel as well as the care for service members and their families to the congressional defense committees within 120 days of enactment of this Act.